REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 26-33 remain pending. The new claims are directed to an alkaline storage battery, supported for example at pages 7-8 of the specification and claim 15. The claims include various features from original claims 1-7, 15 and 16 as well.

The previous claims were rejected as anticipated or obvious over Maeda, or obvious over Maeda in view of Mori and Bernard. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections if they are applied to the new claims.

Independent claim 26 is directed to an alkaline storage battery that includes a positive electrode plate whose active material includes both hardly-soluble cobalt compound and easily-soluble cobalt compound. Maeda neither discloses nor suggests the use of both types of cobalt compounds in a positive electrode plate.

Mori and Bernard do not remedy the deficiency of Maeda. Neither reference suggests the inclusion of both hardly-soluble cobalt compound and easily-soluble cobalt compound in a positive electrode plate. Mori discloses the addition of metallic cobalt or various cobalt compounds to a metal hydride electrode. However, the reference teaches that various individual cobalt compounds can be used instead of metallic cobalt. Mori does not teach that combinations of cobalt compounds should be used, and particularly provides no basis for selecting both hardly-soluble cobalt compound and easily-soluble cobalt compound, nor any reason to expect that any advantageous properties would be achieved by making such a selection. Bernard merely discusses some properties of cobalt compounds in the background section of the disclosure; the primary focus of the reference is the use of cobalt that is "syncrystallized" with another element such as antimony, silver, etc. Thus, Bernard likewise does not suggest the selection of both hardly-soluble cobalt compound and easily-soluble cobalt compound for the positive electrode plate. As the references, even if combined, do not suggest the combination of cobalt compounds required by claim 1, there is not even a prima facie case of obviousness established for the present claims.

Moreover, as discussed in the present specification at page 9, lines 3-20, the use of the two types of cobalt compounds has been found to be advantageous for the

conductive network formed in the electrode plate. The experimental work reported in Examples 4-5 of the present specification further demonstrates the advantageous longevity achieved with the present invention, with the results being illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5. Nothing in any of the references of record suggests that such advantages could be achieved. Therefore, even if the references were to be considered sufficient to establish prima facie obviousness, the unexpected advantages enjoyed by the present invention overcome any such prima facie obviousness.

Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD
P. O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 371-5265

Date: Nov. 18, 2004

By _____
Douglas P. Mueller
Reg. No. 30,300